other broadcast and nonbroadcast transmissions.

In its order, the commission defined teletext as an "ancillary broadcast service,"—thereby exempting it from fairness doctrine and equal time obligations ("Closed Circuit," March 28). The service was authorized on lines 14-18 and 20 on the VBI. From 1988 through 1991, it said it would phase in permission to use lines 10-13 as well. By that time it expects receiver manufacturers to eliminate the main picture degradation that the use of those lines for teletext creates on present sets. Although the staff proposed to permit teletext on line 21, which is used for closed captioned text services for the hearing impaired, the commission vetoed that proposal. The commission said, however, it would consider whether to permit teletext on that line in five years.

After the meeting, Jim Green, chief of the Mass Media Bureau's policy analysis branch, said VBI offerings would be restricted to "material intended for display on a viewing screen" for the time being. But the commission will launch a further notice of proposed rulemaking to consider authorizing other offerings—for example, a paging service—on the VBI, he said.

Under the rules, broadcasters who offer teletext as broadcasters—that is, by offering mass media services—will be able to launch or drop teletext offerings without notifying the FCC in advance. Broadcasters whose offerings resemble private or common carrier operations, however, will have to notify the commission first, Green said.

Noncommercial broadcasters, according to the FCC, may offer teletext on a for-profit basis.

At the meeting, the hot topic of debate was whether to give teletext must-carry protection on cable.

FCC Chairman Mark Fowler carried the flag for those who thought such protection was unnecessary. It would be "anticompetitive," preventing cable operators from providing teletext operations of their own in place of those they could strip, Fowler said. "Why are we forcing this down their [cable operators'] throats?" Fowler asked. " Why not leave them some discretion?"

Robert Powers, acting chief scientist, contended that many cable systems were technically incapable of carrying broadcasters' teletext offerings without doing damage to the main broadcast signals. Requiring must-carry would either force cable operators to spend a lot of money to upgrade their capabilities, or cable operators would deluge the commission with waiver requests, he said.

Commissioner Henry Rivera contended that the commission shouldn't exempt teletext from must-carry protection—at least not until it it had addressed the broader question of whether to retain mandatory signal carriage rules in general. "By allowing cable operators to strip [teletext], we're taking a piecemeal approach to must-carry," Rivera said.

Commissioner Stephen Sharp argued that the FCC was constrained from defining teletext as an entity separate from the main broadcast signal, and he maintained that the whole signal should be subject to must-carry obligations. Besides, he argued, by not imposing must-carry obligations, the commission could "stifle" teletext's development. Without must-carry status, a broadcaster's teletext audience could be substantially diminished, and that could "threaten the economic viability [of teletext] and will hurt this service over all," Sharp said.

It was on a separate vote of 4-3 that the commission decided against must-carry obligations, with Commissioners Joseph Fogarty, Henry Rivera and Stephen Sharp objecting.

The FCC's action drew strong criticism from Edward O. Fritts, president of the National Association of Broadcasters. "Today's commission action threatens the expansion, the future and the integrity of all new telecommunications services," Fritts said. "By permitting partial carriage of broadcast signals into the home, the FCC potentially precludes the public from receiving new additional broadcast services such as teletext. NAB finds the ruling to be short-sighted as well as a clear disincentive to future broadcast users of the VBI. Any broadcast signal that is carried should be carried in its entirety, not in a piecemeal, haphazard fashion. This ruling throws the overall integrity of the spectrum into question.

"The commission's decision to, once again, opt for marketplace establishment of technical standards portends further disaster. A similar decision was made a year ago regarding AM stereo. To this date, no marketplace consensus is in sight, and AM stereo may never become a reality," Fritts said. □

Nick of time. Hours before an April 1 deadline might have cancelled its proposed run next fall, *Breakaway*, a one-hour syndicated early fringe strip created by The Bennett Group, New York, cleared the Metromedia-owned stations in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston, making a "firm go" for the program all but certain. Contracts are to be signed today (April 4) for a definite launch of the program on Sept. 12.

The Metromedia clearance brings *Breakaway*'s coverage of U.S. homes to about 50%. The Metromedia stations have not yet set a time period, but it will probable run in daytime.

Meanwhile, another syndicated strip with a clearance deadline last week, Viacom Enterprises' *People Versus*, cleared WGN-TV Chicago last Thursday. That project's deadline has been extended to today.

ABC rides 'Winds' to victory

The network's blockbuster mini-series propels it to a sweep of sweeps in February

With their network's high-flying *Winds of War* mini-series providing extra power, ABC-TV affiliates surged—as expected—to clear victory in prime time in the February local market sweep measurements.

ABC researchers, compiling Arbitron findings for all 210 of its markets, reported last week that ABC affiliates took first place in 86 of the 142 markets in which all three networks have affiliates, while CBS affiliates were first in 47 and NBC affiliates first in nine. Compared with the February 1982 sweeps this was a gain of 42 markets for ABC and declines of 26 for CBS and 19 for NBC. (The counts include ties.)

In total, homes using television and tuned to one of the three networks in prime time rose 7.6% from the February 1982 sweep figure, reaching 46,274,000 per average quarter-hour. By the ABC researchers' count, ABC affiliates accounted for 39.1% of these, a gain of 5.3 share points from February 1982, while CBS affiliates accounted for 33.9% (a loss of 2.5 points) and NBC affiiates for 27.1%(a loss of 2.7points)

The ABC homes total was put at 18,067,000, a gain of 24.2% over February a year ago. CBS's was put at 15,696,000, representing no significant change, and NBC's at 12,511,000, a 2.3% decline.

ABC authorities said ABC affiliates increased their homes delivery in 168 of Arbitron's 210 markets, while CBS affiliates increased delivery in 100 markets and NBC affiliates in 43. Declines in delivery were recorded by ABC affiliates in three markets, by CBS affiliates in 63 and by NBC affiliates in 119.

In addition to their 86 first-place markets, ABC affiliates placed second in 37 (down from 50 a year earlier) and third in 19 (down from 46), CBS affiliates, apart from ranking first in 47 markets, came in second in 82 (up from 49) and third in 13 (down from 18). For NBC affiliates, in addition to nine first places, they were second in 25 (down from 40) and third in 108 (up from 72). These counts include ties.

The 210 markets measured by Arbitron this year are one fewer than a year ago, Miles City, Mont., having lost its status as a separate area of dominant influence (ADI).

The table at right was developed by BROADCASTING from ABC researchers' compilation of Arbitron's February 1983 and 1982 reports. Bold-face numbers represent first place in market. Household numbers are in thousands (add 000) per average quarter-hour (Monday-Saturday 8-11 p.m. and Sunday 7-11 p.m., NYT) and represent viewing of network programs only, any local programing that appeared in prime time having been excluded. The numbers accompanying household numbers indicate share of three-network audience in that market. Percent change shows household gain or loss from February 1982. A dash (-) indicates no primary affiliate in the market. The 1983 sweep period was Feb. 2- March 1. Not included are markets that Arbitron did not measure, such as those in Hawaii, Alaska and St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. □